

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7008

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, NU

SUBJECT: CAMPESINOS ABANDON CURIA

REF: MANAGUA 2277, PARA 1

1. ON 28 JUNE, 60 CAMPESINOS VOLUNTARILY ABANDONED THE ARCHBISHOP'S CURIA IN MANAGUA WHICH THEY HAD BEEN OCCUPYING FOR 28 DAYS. THE CAMPESINOS STATED THAT THIS "IN NO WAY SIGNIFIES THE END OF THE BATTLE TO ACQUIRE LAND."

2. THE CURIA WAS OCCUPIED IN SUPPORT OF LAND INVASIONS IN TONALA (REFTEL). ON 23 JUNE, THE SITUATION APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY RESOLVED WHEN EL CENTRO-AMERICANO (LEON) REPORTED THAT FANOR ARQUELLO SACASA, A WEALTHY COTTON GROWER, HAD OFFERED 1400 MANZANAS (APPROXIMATELY 2416 ACRES), AT A PRICE GREATLY BELOW ALLEGED MARKET VALUE, FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE CAMPESINOS. EL CENTRO-AMERICANO REPORTED THE VALUE OF THE LAND AT 10,000 - 12,000 CORDOBAS PER MANZANA (APPROXIMATELY 1428 - 1714 DOLLARS), BUT, ARGUELLO WOULD ACCEPT 3500 CORDOBAS PER MANZANA (500 DOLLARS). ON 24 JUNE, LA PRENSA REPORTED THAT IAN HAD INITIATED STUDIES DIRECTED TOWARD THE ACQUISITION OF LAND IN CHINANDEGA FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE CAMPESINOS.

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ON 28 JUNE, CONGRESS BEGAN HEARINGS INTO THE LAND PROBLEM IN CHINANDEGA.

3. WHEN THE CURIA WAS OCCUPIED, THE ARCHBISHOP OFFERED HIS GOOD OFFICES TO ATTEMPT RESOLUTION OF THE SITUATION. QUOTATIONS FROM LA PRENSA, 28 JUNE, INDICATE THAT THE CAMPESINOS WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE LAND AS AN INITIAL STEP TOWARD RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

4. HOWEVER, THE 29 JUNE EL CENTROAMERICANO INDICATED THAT THE ACQUISITION OF THE LAND WAS NOT A CERTAINTY. THE PRESIDENT OF THE BANCO CENTRAL HAD TESTIFIED BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE THAT A MAXIMUM OF 600 CORDOBAS (APPROXIMATELY 85 DOLLARS) PER MANZAN COULD BE PAID TO PURCHASE THIS LAND.

5. COMMENT: WHAT APPEARED TO BE PROGRESS IN THIS MATTER MAY NOW HAVE BECOME DERAILED. THE CAMPESIONOS HAVE BEEN GROWING INCREASINGLY MILITANT AND ARE LIKELY TO RENEW THEIR CAMPAIGN IF THIS PARTIAL SOLUTION DOES NOT COME OFF. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT THE IAN MAY BE DEPARTING FROM ITS TRADITIONAL STANCE OF OFFERING ONLY LANDS IN THE ISOLATED EASTERN AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. ARGUELLO'S MOTIVES MAY BE MORE THAN HUMANITARIAN. HE HAS INDICATED TO A POLOFF THAT, DUE TO HIS AFFLUENCE, HE FELT HE WOULD BE AN EARLY TARGET IN ANY FSLN CAMPAIGN OF KIDNAPPINGS FOR RANSOM. SOLAUN

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